

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANILA 13144

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, RP

SUBJECT: PHILIPPINE MISSILE TEST

1. ON SEPTEMBER 7, PRESIDENT AND MRS. MARCOS WITNESSED THE FIRING OF FOUR PHILIPPINE-MADE ROCKETS AT A BEACH SITE NEAR LA PAZ ON THE NORTHWEST COAST OF LUZON. ON THE FOLLOWING DAY THE MANILA PRESS GAVE FRONT PAGE COVERAGE TO THE EVENT, INCLUDING A PHOTO OF THE PRESIDENTIAL PARTY IN HARD HATS WATCHING THE BLAST-OFF FROM A SANDBAG BUNKER. PRESS ACCOUNTS OF THE LAUNCHING OF "OUR VERY OWN...BALLISTIC MISSILES" NOTED THAT THEY WENT "ROARING TWO KILOMETERS INTO THE SKY BEFORE PLUMMETING INTO THE SOUTH CHINA SEA SOME 10 TO 12 KILOMETERS AWAY."

2. THE FOUR "MISSILES" WERE FIRED ONE AT A TIME FROM WHAT THE PRESS CALLED A MOBILE ROCKET PAD. A PHOTOGRAPH OF THE LAUNCHING SHOWS WHAT APPEARS TO BE A 2-1/2 TON FLAT-BED TRUCK WITH AN APPROXIMATELY 20 FT. LONG SINGLE LAUNCH RAIL ON THE REAR. THE ROCKET (PHOTOGRAPHED IN FLIGHT) APPEARS TO BE ABOUT SIX FEET LONG AND IS FIN STABILIZED.

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3. THE ROCKETS ARE THE JOINT PRODUCT OF THE PHILIPPINE

ARMED FORCES AND THE NATIONAL SCIENCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD. PRESIDENT MARCOS, IN REMARKS FOLLOWING THE LAUNCHING TESTS, NOTED THE ROLE OF THE ROCKETS IN THE SELF-RELIANCE DEFENSE PROGRAM AND ADDED THAT THEY COULD BE USED AGAINST "INVADING SEACRAFT OR PLANES".

4. ALTHOUGH PRESS ACCOUNTS DID NOT REFER TO THE SENSITIVE QUESTION OF WEATHER MODIFICATION, IT WILL BE RECALLLED THAT EARLIER PHILIPPINE ROCKET PROGRAMS HAVE BEEN DESCRIBED BY GOP SOURCES AS EFFORTS TO DEVELOP A VEHICLE FOR CLOUD SEEDING AND TYPHOON CONTROL. THIS LATEST LAUNCH EVENT SUGGESTS THAT THE LOCAL STATE OF THE ART IS STILL NOT MUCH BEYOND THE ROMAN CANDLE STAGE (PHOTOS SHOW NO EVIDENCE OF ANY ASSOCIATED GUIDANCE OR OTHER ELECTRONIC GEAR), AND THAT "OUR OWN BALLISTIC MISSILE" IS STILL ON THE DRAWING PAD.
SULLIVAN

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